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## Shock and Awe: A Summary Account of Brigadier General Griffith Rutherford's 1776 Military Campaign against the Cherokee in Western North Carolina and Its Impact on American Westward Expansion

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John Chappo, PhD

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Since the guns fell silent following America's successful defense of its claim of independency from Great Britain in the closing decades of the 1700s there has been an immense outpouring of scholarship on the contest and its impact. A basic search of "the American Revolution" within Amazon.com reveals 107,791 results under "books" alone. The titles reflect the focus of researchers and writers on any number of aspects of the war: cultural, economic, military, political, or social; there are consensus macro-histories as well as the more mundane yet illuminating micro-histories.<sup>1</sup> Collectively these works continue to shape the present understanding of the revolutionary period from various contexts, whether from the American, both Tory and Patriot, white and black American, the British, or the Native American viewpoints. In fact, the ongoing outpouring of scholarship reveals a fascination with the revolutionary period of American history that is perhaps exceeded only by interest in the American Civil War era. Yet despite all of the innovation and erudition displayed in framing the collective narrative of the American Revolutionary War era, there remains a surprising dearth of information available that explores and explains the impact of the war on society along the American frontier, especially in western North Carolina, or the lasting impact of the fighting and how it shaped post-war policy.

While clearly scholars have addressed the interactions of individual states and Native American communities during the revolutionary era and while they have also clearly written about the entire frontier region more generally, few have focused on the impact of Brigadier General Griffith Rutherford's 1776 autumn campaign against the Cherokee in western North Carolina.<sup>2</sup> Known as the Rutherford Trace, his campaign revealed fully the hard hand of total war. Rutherford's campaign also concomitantly helped shape America's collective memory of native peoples as "savages" which, in turn, helped frame America's Indian policies in the years and decades following the conflict. The purpose of this article is to help fill the historiographical gap relative to the nexus of British, American (Tory and Patriot), and Native American interests and designs along the

American Revolutionary frontier. The paper argues that Rutherford's campaign, combined with associated operations in South Carolina and Virginia, helped fuel American post-Revolutionary policy-making, both domestic and foreign, more than any other region of the war.<sup>3</sup> Results indicate that Rutherford's expedition was anything but pyrrhic in nature as has been advanced by some recent scholarship.<sup>4</sup> In fact, Rutherford's actions, in conjunction with armed incursions from the neighboring states of Virginia and South Carolina, were wholly transformative. "Patriot" actions during the American Revolution, such as the Rutherford Trace of this study, aided the continued development of the militia system along the frontier, limited Cherokee abilities to coordinate with or support British or American Tory designs throughout the upcountry, divided the Cherokee between those who supported peace and those who called for armed opposition to American patriots as evidenced by the formation of the Chickamauga Cherokee under Dragging Canoe, and also helped frame and advance a successful blueprint for westward expansion that could be found in concerted, multi-state action—a blueprint that would be used by policy-makers in decades following the Revolution. What follows is a brief account of the impact of the Rutherford Trace campaign on Cherokee peoples and on American westward expansion and policy-making, especially in the post-war era.

The military offensive led by Griffith Rutherford in September 1776—largely remembered today as the Rutherford Trace—sought to eliminate the Cherokee as a potential British ally and to punish them for attacking white settlements along the western North Carolina interior. In less than a month, Rutherford's men destroyed dozens of Cherokee settlements and appropriated or burned hundreds of acres of crops and numerous head of livestock.

While Rutherford's 2,500 men witnessed little loss of life from battlefield wounds during the month-long campaign, largely because they encountered limited resistance from the Cherokee, many would eventually succumb to disease and exhaustion following the expedition, perhaps a natural expectation after trekking over 300 miles through the mountainous terrain often on short rations. The efforts of those who took part in the expedition were as celebrated in their time as they are remembered throughout North Carolina to the present day, as evidenced by the naming of counties and towns like Rutherford, Lenoir, and Buncombe.<sup>5</sup>

Cherokee remembrance of Rutherford's expedition, not surprisingly, is one hardly celebrated because it was marred by loss. Council houses and villages—some thousands of years old—were desecrated or destroyed. The destruction of Cherokee homes and food stores produced little more than a refugee state for the Cherokee people in the winter of 1776 and thus is remembered unto present day for

its harshness and brutality. Whether the clash between red and white in the western reaches of British North America was inevitable remains debatable. What is less debated, however, is the fact that Rutherford's Trace broke any real or perceived alliance between the Cherokee and the British and thus paved the way for further white incursion and settlement into Cherokee country.

In 1775, at the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals (the largest private land sale in U.S. history of 20 million acres including prime Cherokee hunting grounds), a plurality of Cherokee chiefs agreed to turn over much of what is present day Kentucky to white settlers. Dissenting leaders, however, such as the Cherokee war chief Dragging Canoe, spoke out harshly against the treaty and vowed to fight against the growing tide of white settlements. "Whole Indian nations have melted away like snowballs in the sun before the white man's advance," said Dragging Canoe. "We had hoped that the white men would not be willing to travel beyond the mountains. Now that is gone. They have passed the mountains, and have settled upon Cherokee land."<sup>6</sup>

As much as the British attempted to court Dragging Canoe as a leader against the American colonists who considered themselves "Patriots"—even to the point of supplying Dragging Canoe's Cherokee warriors with British guns and ammunition—the British also recognized that the division within the Cherokee camp meant that the Americans might also try to curry Cherokee support against white "loyalists" along the frontier, especially from those Cherokee who stood in opposition to Dragging Canoe. In an effort to ward off any patriot attempts at alliance, the British commissioned Alexander Cameron, their well-known and well-received frontier agent, to push for Cherokee neutrality or perhaps even full, open warfare on American patriots.<sup>7</sup>

While the Cherokee had come to trust Alexander Cameron since his interactions with them during the French and Indian War, they remained suspicious of any soldier who donned a red coat, as Cherokee-British relations had long been anything but smooth or harmonious. During the Anglo-Cherokee War of 1759-1761, British soldiers marched through Cherokee settlements burning villages and cutting crops. A 1761 peace treaty between the Cherokee and British promised no white settlements west of the Blue Ridge. Despite the treaty, American settlers continued moving westward anyway. In time, the Cherokee began to recognize a developing pattern of the white man's ability to outstep agreements via the continued clearing of forests, over-harvesting of game, erection of fences, buildings, and towns, and seemingly one-sided trade deals that exchanged a modest number of European trade goods for hundreds of acres of land.<sup>8</sup>

By the summer of 1776, Cameron used his positive standing among the

Cherokee to help focus their dissatisfaction with white transgressions, most specifically on the white settlers who claimed to support the patriot cause. While he only initially asked the Cherokee to remain neutral in the ongoing fight between the so-styled Tories and Patriots that raged across the upcountry, British pressure from civil and military leaders, along with an increasing number of bloody attacks and equally bloody reprisals across the Cherokee and white borderlands, caused Cameron to rebrand his message into one of open, armed Cherokee support for the British in exchange for powder and arms. Adding personal action to his message, Cameron himself reportedly led a group of some 200 white loyalists and native peoples against frontier patriots.<sup>9</sup>

Even prior to Cameron's direct involvement, the colonial North Carolina militias had been forming throughout the late spring and summer in the wake of the Cherokee incursions and killings along the boundary separating white settlement and the Nations. While revenge against "the savages" remained the primary motive of the militia men, North Carolina's Committee of Safety, including the Council's president Cornelius Harnett, expressed interest in supporting ventures that would contain or perhaps even eliminate those "disaffected to the American cause" along the western reaches of the Old North state.<sup>10</sup>

The earnestness of the militias and the Committee of Safety increased in the spring of 1776. News of the intermittent raids on frontier families quickly spread alarm through the Piedmont and even into the Low Country. In June and July, Cherokee raids became even more widespread, adding to the growing concern. To make matters worse, reports indicated that the attacks appeared to be coordinated—and even led by Loyalists such as Cameron—with some of the attacks being conducted on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge.<sup>11</sup>

With the Carolinas already under the threat of British invasion via Charleston, it appeared perfectly logical to Griffith Rutherford and other Patriots that the Crown would utilize Cherokees and Tories in the upcountry to force them to fight on two fronts. It is worth noting here that the rumor mill regarding British instigation of the Cherokee only added to the cloud of suspicion surrounding men like the aforementioned Alexander Cameron. Most British officials, however, little approved of the murderous attacks on civilians even if the attacks appeared to have been carried out by younger braves that refused to heed any white man's advice.

In early July, near his home in Salisbury, North Carolina, Rutherford began to exchange letters in earnest with the Council of Safety, the quasi-defense department for North Carolina. While the Council announced its suspicion of British agents, it also advised Rutherford to resist reacting too quickly to avoid an escalation of hostilities with the Cherokee before it could adequately plan a proper

response to the British army's potential movements along the coast. "It is the Intention of this Council," the committee wrote to Rutherford, "that you Cautiously . . . prevent the Inhabitants of this colony from committing any Depredations on the Indians."<sup>12</sup>

As Rutherford tried to calm the fears of some westerners while concurrently preaching patience for those bent on retaliating for lost property and lives of kin, he grew increasingly concerned that the Council of Safety—a Council headquartered in Halifax several days' ride in the saddle and hundreds of miles east of Salisbury—failed to fully understand and appreciate the gravity of the situation in the west. His efforts to secure supplies met with little success and news of more attacks seemed to come in daily. Believing he needed to take the initiative and knowing he lacked authorization to pursue "savages" and Tory hostiles outside of western North Carolina, Rutherford queried the Council with a proposed plan of action.

In addition to reiterating the need for more supplies, especially gunpowder and lead for shot and shell, he called for a combined offensive with aid from forces in Virginia and South Carolina.<sup>13</sup> Together they would launch a three-pronged assault into the upcountry and across the Blue Ridge Mountains to affect the "Destruction of the Cherroce [sic] Nation" and, with the British preparing to move on Charleston, averting a fight on two fronts.<sup>14</sup>

The Council of Safety reacted well to Rutherford's plan. They immediately queried the leaders of Virginia and South Carolina for support in the effort. Both states, reeling from the same types of attacks and harboring the same sorts of concerns as those held by the westerners of North Carolina, needed little prodding. South Carolina's President John Rutledge and Virginia's Lieutenant Governor John Page both agreed to support the joint operations against the Cherokee and began preparations for a combined movement.

While news of support from beyond North Carolina surely aided Rutherford's plans, he also knew that innumerable North Carolinians from the western reaches cared little for the state's move to break from England in the summer of 1776. Further, he recognized that the fighting would enable long-running upcountry feuds—fights that reflected more of a civil war than a war between state actors—to continue unabated. Taken together, Loyalist opposition might prove problematic to movements and success of the expedition.

Yet the Loyalist presence, however unpleasant for Rutherford and the Council of Safety, proved to be a less immediate and less identifiable threat than the Cherokee braves. The Indians, Rutherford stated in a July letter, were "making Grate prograce in Destroying & Murdering in the frunteers"<sup>15</sup> of Carolina. By his

estimates, nearly 40 settlers had been massacred in the past few weeks. Worse, he claimed that one of his officers, along with some 120 people (many women and children), were besieged along the Catawba River, and thus he wanted the Council's approval to march immediately to their support. Reluctant to give Rutherford authority to move en masse before offensive plans could be finalized with Virginia and South Carolina, the Council of Safety agreed to a limited offensive.

With the Council's blessing, Rutherford's militia immediately set off down the Catawba River as far as Davidson's Fort on the leeward side of Blue Ridge (today Old Fort in McDowell County, North Carolina). After establishing a garrison at Davidson's Fort, Rutherford led a contingent of militia through the Blue Ridge against a smaller force of Cherokees at the headwaters of the Catawba. A sharp skirmish ensued but Rutherford's men easily drove nearly 200 Cherokee warriors from their positions thus relieving the besieged settlers. While casualties on both sides were light, the discovery of whites among and alongside the Cherokee casualties did much to substantiate the claim that Tories and British agents such as Cameron were inciting insurrection.<sup>16</sup>

As the immediate threat to further Cherokee incursions to the eastern side of the Blue Ridge subsided, Rutherford and the Council of Safety coordinated offensive operational plans with colonial leaders from Virginia and South Carolina. North Carolina sent a packet of letters (really testimonials) that Rutherford had gathered regarding the conduct of the Cherokee in their state's western region. To General Charles Lee, then commanding Continentals at Charleston, the Council of Safety pledged cooperation and optimism. The "Troops Brigadier Rutherford carries with him," they wrote to Lee, "are as chosen Rifle Men as any on this Continent . . . We have every expectation from them."<sup>17</sup>

While on the march to Davidson's Fort, Rutherford received word that civil authorities in South Carolina had already ordered Major Andrew Williamson to attack Cherokee "Overhill" settlements beyond the Blue Ridge.<sup>18</sup> Rutherford understood fully, therefore, that his attack constituted one-third of an overarching offensive by authorities in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, and that he should try to coordinate plans if practicable. Yet because communication would be nearly impossible given the terrain, the Council, for all intents and purposes, wrote Rutherford a blank check. "[A]ll matters [for the expedition]," they said, "we leave entirely to your discretion."<sup>19</sup>

In early August, with Williamson moving against the Cherokee to his south, Rutherford sent word to William Christian, then directing Virginia's forces to the north, that he would begin his march as soon as men and supplies were

gathered at Davidson's Fort. He also expressed his hope that the three armies could link up somewhere in the Overhill district, or in modern-day eastern Tennessee.<sup>20</sup>

As Rutherford's numbers of men and supplies swelled, he received a letter from Williamson in South Carolina that would be a harbinger of things to come for Rutherford and his band. Aside from mentioning that he hoped to link up with Rutherford in early September near Cowee on the Little Tennessee River in the North Carolina district,<sup>21</sup> Williamson announced that Cherokee resistance had been scattered and irregular. Few warriors, he said, remained behind to slow his army's advance through the South Carolina backcountry. With the Cherokee resistance nominal, Williamson could insure that "desolation [had been] . . . spread all over the lower towns" as he burned Cherokee homes and crops.<sup>22</sup>

Throughout August 1776, Rutherford gathered nearly 2,800 men between the ages of 16 and 60 along with various supplies at Davidson's Fort. Quartermaster reports suggest that some supplies came from as far away as Philadelphia, suggesting that members of the Second Continental Congress likely were aware of the offensive operations against the Cherokee. By the end of the month, Rutherford, the Irish-born, middle-aged, newly appointed brigadier general who had served in the Colonial legislature as well as the Council of Safety, prepared to open the "Rutherford Trace" campaign in his district of western North Carolina.<sup>23</sup>

Rutherford left about 400 of his militia to guard Davidson's Fort and the surrounding region as he prepared to set out for western North Carolina on September 1, 1776. He had nearly 1,400 packhorses, a herd of beef cattle, and a small arsenal that included long rifles, hatchets, and a few small field cannons. Lacking official uniforms, militia members took along their own clothing and many used their own hunting rifles. As they moved west, they received an escort and armed support from the native peoples of the Catawba. The Catawba had long been foes of the Cherokee and viewed the American "patriots" as a vehicle to help regain lost lands and prestige. Taken together, Rutherford had enough provisions to last six weeks or until stores were exhausted.<sup>24</sup>

Within the first week of the campaign, Rutherford's band crossed the Blue Ridge east of Black Mountain at Swannanoa Gap. Wisely, Rutherford continued his march along the Swannanoa River through much of the present-day Biltmore Village area near Asheville, North Carolina, until they reached and subsequently forded the French Broad River.<sup>25</sup> In three days, they had covered nearly thirty miles and remained free from attack.<sup>26</sup>

Having successfully forded both major water arteries, Rutherford's men marched through Canton and then southward along present day North Carolina

Route 110 toward Bethel. Having met little resistance along the river paths, they moved from Bethel up the east side of the Pigeon River and continued on to Waynesville where they made encampment at Sulphur Springs. From Sulphur Springs they marched west through Balsam Mountain Gap into Sylva, the modern-day county seat of Jackson County, North Carolina. On September 8, 1776, Rutherford dispatched a reconnaissance force of about 1,000 from Sylva, many on horseback, southward toward the Cherokee town of Watauga along the Tuckasegee River.<sup>27</sup> As had been the case for Williamson in South Carolina, Rutherford's men found resistance very light and the town deserted. As had also been the case with Williamson's men, Rutherford's band burned all the houses and crops, seized or destroyed all the livestock, and killed any Cherokee that put up resistance.<sup>28</sup>

With Watauga in ashes and with Cherokee warriors nearly non-existent, Rutherford pressed on smartly. He dispatched another group of nearly 900 men to cross the Tuckasegee River and move up the Cowee Gap toward Nikwasi near modern-day Franklin, North Carolina. At Nikwasi, Rutherford rejoined his men and consolidated his army while waiting for Williamson to arrive with his South Carolinians. On the night of September 9, 1776, Rutherford issued orders for 900 men to travel west to burn all Cherokee towns. The general then sent another 600 men to locate Williamson. They, too, had orders to burn any Cherokee towns they might come upon in their expedition.<sup>29</sup>

On September 11, as Rutherford waited for Williamson, he received a letter from the Council of Safety regarding personal retaliation against Cherokee non-combatants. “[W]e have to desire that you will restrain the Soldierly,” they wrote, “from destroying women and Children.”<sup>30</sup> Sources indicate that little of this type of retaliation and retribution took place against non-combatants, despite the fairly large numbers of elderly men, women, and children that had been present in some of the towns. In William Lenoir's diary within the Southern Historical Collection, however, there is an entry of a Cherokee squaw being scalped. The tragic event seems to have been more the exception than the rule, especially because any unnecessary brutality toward the Cherokee people did meet with harsh punishment from Rutherford.<sup>31</sup>

By September 16, Rutherford's men had destroyed dozens of Cherokee towns—some with as many as 100 homes—and vast stores of food. With little sign of Williamson, Rutherford turned south from Nikwasi and continued his scorched-earth policy. Curiously and largely owing to the incredibly rugged terrain, Williamson's men had been driving north and burning towns on a nearly parallel line as Rutherford's men through much of what is present day Macon County, North Carolina. Finally, on September 26, Williamson and Rutherford joined

forces.<sup>32</sup>

After linking forces, Rutherford and Williamson met to determine future action. As veteran leaders and campaigners, they carefully weighed all aspects and decided against any further operations or any movement farther into the Overhill lands of the Cherokee. Several factors weighed into the decision to suspend the campaign, though two seem to have been foremost in Rutherford's mind: first, the terrain through the Smoky Mountains would further strain supply and communication; second, the weather would soon turn and winter in the mountains would surely strain morale, especially should supplies fail. Also, most of his militia men recognized they might not be paid for their service. They realized that any payment they might receive from the Provincial Congress would likely be nearly worthless anyway because of the depreciated value of the underpinning state currency.<sup>33</sup>

After saying goodbyes to Williamson and his South Carolinians, Rutherford marched his army back to Davidson's Fort along nearly the same route they had traveled and burned only weeks before. Despite the relatively few battle casualties suffered by Rutherford's 2,500 men during the campaign, records suggest that approximately 10 percent of his men eventually succumbed to illness after they returned home from the expedition. Thus, while Rutherford himself received the gratitude of his state, and while his military and political star had risen with the notoriety he gained from the expedition, it was a bittersweet campaign because of the impact it had on the health of his men, many of whom were his friends.<sup>34</sup>

For the Cherokee, Rutherford's Trace had been devastating. The colonial militias had burned or destroyed an estimated 55 to 70 settlements throughout the western regions. In addition to the incredible loss of shelter, the Cherokee faced a winter without food that forced them into a near refugee state to use modern parlance. Their condition continued to deteriorate in the ensuing months, when Virginia militia under the command of Colonel William Christian laid further waste to the region even after Williamson and Rutherford turned back their columns. Rutherford, too, sanctioned an additional raid—made in November of 1776 and led by Captain William Moore—that followed his September campaign's line of march with the purpose of destroying any Cherokee efforts to rebuild or re-inhabit settlements destroyed during the Rutherford Trace.

The degree to which the Rutherford Trace impacted the Cherokee will to fight and aided future U.S. Presidents such as Andrew Jackson in their desire to push westward remains debatable, but the expedition clearly provided a blueprint of success as it related to westward expansion. This was especially true within the

context of how best to deal with native peoples even if they were deemed civilized. The future success of American westward expansion into territory claimed by native peoples, such as the Indian Removal Act (1830) or Indian Appropriations Acts (1851, 1871, 1885, and 1889), could ultimately be found in concerted, multi-state action akin to that affected in late-1776 and early-1777 during the Rutherford Trace.

## Notes

1. Search conducted by the author, accessed January 14, 2016, [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_ss\\_c\\_0\\_23?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=the+american+revolution&srefix=the+american+revolution%2Caps%2C130](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_c_0_23?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=the+american+revolution&srefix=the+american+revolution%2Caps%2C130).
2. While a number of studies exist about the nexus of individual state and Native American actions during the American Revolutionary Era, a select few are as follows: For state actions see Edmund Alexander Bacon, *South Carolina, 1775: A Crucible of War* (Staunton, Virginia: American History Press, 2009); Roger A. Ekirch, *Poor Carolina: Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Freeman H. Hart, *The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, 1763-1789* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1942); For Native American actions see Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in North American Communities* (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); James H. O'Donnell III, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1973); Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010).
3. Among the more recent works that address Rutherford's contributions in a well-documented and engaging way is Nadia Dean's, *A Demand of Blood: The Cherokee War of 1776* (Cherokee, North Carolina: Valley River Press, 2012).
4. Richard Blackmon, *Dark and Bloody Ground: The American Revolution along the Southern Frontier* (Yardley, Pennsylvania: Westholme, 2012), 91.
5. Michael Beadle, "Rutherford Trace," *The Smoky Mountain News*, week of August 23, 2006; can be accessed electronically via LEARN NC at the following <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4298>.
6. Dragging Canoe, Cherokee Leader, 1775 quoted from the Western North Carolina Historical Association, accessed January 7, 2016, <http://www.wnchistory.org/Exhibits/cherokee.html>.
7. John L. Nichols, "Alexander Cameron, British Agent among the Cherokee," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (April, 1996), 94; according to Nichols, the Cherokee were so enamored with Cameron that they referred to him as "Scotchie" a likely reference to his Scotch heritage. It should be noted here that Cameron did push for neutrality at first but by early 1776, he called for Dragging Canoe to take no prisoners in their quest to rid white settlers—who they viewed as squatters—from Cherokee lands.
8. Tyler Boulware, "The Effect of the Seven Years' War on the Cherokee Nation," *Early American Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall, 2007), 395; Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Narrative History of Early America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), 186-187.
9. Nichols, "Alexander Cameron," 109.
10. Dean, *A Demand of Blood*, 172.

11. Captain Samuel Ashe, "Rutherford's Expedition against the Indians," in *The North Carolina Booklet: Great Events in North Carolina History*, Vol. 4, No. 8 (December, 1904), 11.
12. Letter from Thomas Jones to James Iredell, July 23, 1776 quoted in Don Higginbotham, ed., *The Papers of James Iredell, 1751-1799* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1976), 1: 415.
13. It should be noted here that Georgia, too, would send a force under Colonel Samuel Jack against the Cherokee in the Tugaloo River region. He would later serve on the general staff of the Continental-line Georgia Brigade.
14. Letter from Griffith Rutherford to the Council of Safety, July 5, 1776, in William L. Saunders, ed., *Colonial Records of North Carolina* (hereafter *CRNC*), Vol. 10 (Raleigh, NC: Josephus Daniels, 1890), 652.
15. Letter from Griffith Rutherford to the Council of Safety, July 14, 1776, *CRNC*, 10: 669.
16. Ashe, "Rutherford's Expedition against the Indians," 13-14.
17. Letter from the Council of Safety to General Charles Lee, July 16, 1776, in Walter Clark, ed., *State Records of North Carolina* (hereafter *SRNC*) Vol. 11 (Raleigh, NC: Josephus Daniels, 1907), 316.
18. "Overhill" settlements referred to those Cherokee towns and settlements west of the Blue Ridge. It should also be noted that Andrew Williamson is the same person who will earn the unfortunate moniker of "Arnold of Carolina" for his duplicity in 1780. He will narrowly escape being hung, however, because he evidently aided both Americans and British.
19. Letter from the Council of Safety to Griffith Rutherford, July 21, 1776, *SRNC*, 11: 318-319. There is some historical discussion and disagreement as to the amount of input the Council had on Rutherford's expedition despite this letter. While the Council surely sent messages to Rutherford throughout the campaign to pursue a policy of peace whenever possible or even dictating how he should position his troops, this author has found little in the documentation to support such a claim. Rutherford's impetuous nature, coupled with his understanding of Native American warfare, clearly defined how his campaign would be carried out.
20. Letter from Griffith Rutherford to William Christian, August 5, 1776, *CRNC*, 10: 650-651.
21. According to Davy Arch of the Eastern Cherokee Nation, the district included all areas around Franklin, North Carolina of the present day. Unrecorded interview conducted by this author with Davy Arch in September, 2007, in Cullowhee, North Carolina.
22. Letter from Colonel Andrew Williamson to Griffith Rutherford, August 14, 1776, *CRNC*, 10: 745-747.
23. J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton, "Revolutionary War Diary of William Lenoir," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (May, 1940), 250.
24. Letter from Griffith Rutherford to the Council of Safety, September 1, 1776, *CRNC*, 10: 788-789. It should be noted that the Lenoir Family Papers in UNC's Southern Historical Collection also include a trove of information and key first-hand accounts of the expedition because William Lenoir was a participant of the so-styled Rutherford Trace expedition.
25. The area of crossing the French Broad is likely near (and just behind) the Biltmore Square Mall today in Asheville, North Carolina.
26. Roy S. Dickens Jr., "The Route of Rutherford's Expedition against the North Carolina Cherokees," *Southern Indian Studies* Vol. 19, No. 4 (October, 1967), 6.
26. The Cherokee town of Watauga is near present-day Webster, North Carolina.

28. Dickens, "The Route of Rutherford's Expedition," 7-8; Ashe, "Rutherford's Expedition," 16.

29. Rutherford's 900 men would eventually burn all Cherokee settlements as far as Hiawassee in modern-day Clay County, North Carolina along the border with Georgia.

30. Letter from the Council of Safety to Griffith Rutherford, September 11, 1776, *SRNC*, 11: 350.

31. It is worth noting here that Cherokee Tribal historical preservationists such as Tyler Howe and Davy Arch maintain that the absence of Cherokee warriors was a byproduct of Williamson's and Christian's attacks which served as a siphon from Rutherford's central district thus leaving many towns undermanned or undefended. Information gathered during personal face-to-face, oral conversations between this author and tribal historical preservationists in Cherokee and Cullowhee, North Carolina, September 2007.

32. Williamson's band was ambushed near the Wayah Gap on September 19, 1776, resulting in the loss of approximately 30 men with 12 of them being killed. With this notable exception, neither Williamson nor Rutherford met any substantial Cherokee opposition.

33. Report of William Sharpe in Letter from the Council of Safety to Governor Patrick Henry of Virginia, October 25, 1776, *CRNC*, 10: 860. Sharpe was a member of the Council of Safety who had been part of Rutherford's expedition.

34. Ashe, "Rutherford's Expedition against the Indians," 14.

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